

GREATER NEW YORK NEWS

Greater New York Health Care Facilities Association

FOR THE NEWS THAT MATTERS TO OUR MEMBERS



Infection Control Survey Guidance

Mary Gracey-White, RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance and Arlette Drigpaul, MSN, RN, announce GNYHCFA's virtual and onsite compliance support, and examine key reminders for Infection Control Surveys.

Visitation Op-ed

Hon. Michael Balboni, Executive Director, GNYHCFA, explores the CMS guidance to facilitate visitation and emphasizes the need to give residents the opportunity to connect with loved ones face-to-face, beyond a zoom call.

Life Safety Review

John Kerney, Life Safety Consultant, encourages facilities to perform preventative maintenance, especially on-air conditioning and heating systems, which can help lower energy and repair bills.

Upcoming Webinar

Save the date for our next webinar on **April 22, 2021**. Please be sure to visit our website at www.gnyhcfa.org for additional information.

Employee & Facility Recognition

Brooklyn Gardens Nursing and Rehabilitation Center



"I am the Administrator here at Brooklyn Gardens Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, and I have been an Administrator for over 20 years. Throughout my career, I faced many challenges, COVID-19 was the toughest challenge. I am very proud of our awesome team who through the challenges of COVID, was able to weather the storm and provide quality care to the residents. I am standing in our beautiful Rehab Center and thank you to our rehab staff as well that continued to provide the residents with quality rehab services."

Abe Dahan, Administrator

Theresa Bertrand has been a nurse for more than 30 years and a DNS for 12.

"COVID-19 has presented challenges such as strict Infection Control regulations, intense education of staff, and having a robust staffing pool to provide quality care to our residents. I am standing with my outstanding nurse who has went above and beyond, ensuring all staff are tested for Covid-19 and maintains all documentation to guarantee we meet DOH and CDC guidelines. Overall the nursing team at Brooklyn Gardens have faced challenges head on with courtesy and compassion. To quote Disney, 'Team works makes the dream work and our team is working it.'"



Theresa Bertrand, Director of Nursing (Left) and Violet Calder, LPN (Right)

Infection Control Survey Guidance

Mary Gracey-White, RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance, GNYHCFA, Arlette Driggpaul, MSN, RN, GNYHCFA

Quality Corner

To ensure members continue to have successful Infection Control Surveys as well as prepare for when Recertification Surveys start, GNYHCFA will offer both virtual and onsite compliance support. A year into the pandemic has challenged all and much of our focus has clearly been on Infection Prevention and Control. In addition to the direct effects of Covid-19 infection, there are other significant collateral consequences. The impacts of isolation and loneliness has resulted in some residents developing mood disorders and depression, causing the potential increased use of psychotropic medications. There have been reports of weight loss, which may lead to potential issues with skin integrity. We recommend facilities review current Caspar Reports to identify any potential issues and begin QAPI activity where needed.

Please contact the Association to schedule an Onsite or Virtual Compliance Support visit. Contact Laura Brick at lbrick@gnyhcfa.org or Sydney Kay at skay@gnyhcfa.org.

See below for key guidance to promote a successful IC Survey.

Key Reminders for Infection Control Surveys

- Process for screening staff, visitors, and others.
- Adequate and easily accessible hand sanitizers throughout building and in common areas.
- Appropriate signage throughout building – physical distancing clearly marked where needed, hand washing, proper way to wear mask.
- Ensure cleaning and disinfection with appropriate EPA-N list of disinfectants with staff competency and knowledge for specific product use including “kill time.”
- Appropriate signage for rooms/areas/units on Transmission-Based Precautions.
- Use of foot pedal operated receptacles in Isolation rooms.
- Ensure easy access and staff knowledge of where to access PPEs and that PPE carts are stocked with all necessary items (gowns, eye protection, masks, gloves, hand sanitizer).
- Ensure physical distancing in common areas, especially where staff remove masks and eye protection (e.g. break rooms).
- Ensure testing of staff (and residents if indicated) are done and collected in a timely manner, and results are available **within 48 hours**. A staff member must be assigned to validate results received including weekends.
 - May utilize rapid test to satisfy requirements.
- Have all policies/procedures, line listing, staffing (including emergency staffing plan) available at onset of survey.
- NYSDOH surveyors are now reviewing for mood state changes and weight loss as well as immunization and antibiotic stewardship policies/procedures during IC Surveys.
- Continue audits and competencies – hand hygiene, proper use of PPEs.

Visitation Op-ed

Hon. Michael Balboni, Executive Director, GNYHCFA

Visitation in Nursing Homes- Why the Delay??

This week marks the 1-year lock down of nursing homes in NYS. The day the doors were shut, in addition to losing the ability to interact personally with loved ones, nursing home residents were denied the activities that give their lives contact and contour. In person dining with friends, activities and games and even a trip to the beauty salon. Though these things might seem trivial, over time the lack of them places our loved ones in a grey twilight of sensory deprivation. Even the care that they receive is done with staff wearing PPE and lacks the human touch.

Though the lock down of nursing homes was important in stopping the spread of Covid-19, so too it is important to recognize the impact that this medically necessary isolation has had on residents. Isolation and loneliness are comorbidities resulting in depression, mood disorders, weight loss and other negative resident outcomes.

The effects of isolation on residents has been much publicized recently with advocates including families, nursing home staff and legislators requesting that visitation be allowed while adhering to infection prevention measures.

On March 10th CMS recognized this and issued updated, evidenced based guidance to assist in facilitating visitation that was welcomed and carried in the media.

Among some of the changes were that visits that were done outside, would require no restrictions if the facility had low positivity rates in the home. In homes located in counties where the positivity was less than ten percent and over seventy percent of the residents were vaccinated, indoor visitation was now allowed, following the protections of masks and social distancing. Lastly, residents who were fully vaccinated could choose to have contact with visitors that included a hug or a handshake.

There was great joy and expectation at the announcement by families and they began to call the facilities that were home to their loved ones to set up a visit. Unfortunately, staff had to tell them that New York State had not yet approved the CMS updates!!

Though not a full return of visitation, this CMS guidance is a real step in the right direction. We owe it to our residents in nursing homes the ability to reconnect with their loved ones beyond a zoom call.

The State Department should approve of these regulations or tell us why New York's nursing homes shouldn't. New York's nursing homes have been through an awful lot and deserve a hug. Let's give it to them.

Life Safety Review

John Kerney, Life Safety Consultant, GNYHCFA

The Benefits and Savings of Preventive Maintenance – Air Conditioning Preventive Maintenance

Seasonal maintenance for cooling system should be started soon. The benefits of a regular air conditioning preventive maintenance schedule can give you tangible returns of added life to the system. Additionally, it lowers energy and repair bills. Air Conditioning and Heating systems need regular preventive maintenance to maintain the system and keep it running at optimum levels throughout its life. For example, dirty coils cause the compressor to run harder and pull more amps. More amps equate to higher electric bills. Dirty condenser coils, which make your compressor work harder and could eventually cause premature failure of that compressor. So, you pay a higher electric bill, and you pay to replace the compressor sooner rather than later. The benefits out way neglecting your air conditioning and heating system by not carrying out and regular air conditioning preventive maintenance schedule.

Basic Air Conditioning Preventive Maintenance Checklist

- Check the filters and change, as necessary.
- Inspect electrical components and make sure all connections are secure and without corrosion.
- Check evaporator and condenser coils and clean coils, as necessary. Almost always the condenser coil will need a good cleaning as the unit collects dust and dirt in the coils. Clean condensation drain and add pan treatment ensure proper drainage for condensation lines.
- Test controls of system including thermostat, relays, and connections.
- Oil motors, as necessary. Many do not need to be oiled as they have sealed bearings.
- After the unit has been cleaned and has a clean air filter test the unit has proper refrigerant levels if possible, test run PTAC. Proper rated amperage draws for unit.

Air Conditioning Preventive Maintenance Schedules and Contracts

Almost every air conditioning and heating contractor offers preventive maintenance plans. They will automatically care for your unit on a regular basis. The benefits of having such a plan are two-fold. First, your equipment is cleaned and checked by a trained HVAC professional who is aware of common problems that occur with air conditioning and heating equipment because of poor maintenance.

The HVAC professionals basic check should include cleaning the coils (as necessary), check the refrigerant charge, check the electrical connections and components, check and change the filters, blow the condensation lines, check the thermostat, and check all amp draws of all motors including the compressor for unusual readings.

(Continued)

All these things, if checked by a competent HVAC professional should give you peace of mind. Peace of mind that your system will give you efficient comfort throughout the season. This does not mean your system will not have a breakdown, but it does mean you will not be plagued by common problems that occur because of system maintenance neglect.

The secondary benefit for having an air conditioning and heating preventive maintenance contract is if your system does break down, you get priority service. In other words, if your system fails on a Friday afternoon the chances are far better (if you have a maintenance contract) that your system will be up and running again before the end of the weekend if it's not a major part that fails that is unavailable.

If you need more information, please contact GNYHCFA.